

Wabash Valley Interstate Commission
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A BI - STATE APPROACH

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to RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Wabash Valley Interstate Commission

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA



A BI-STATE APPROACH TO RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The Wabash River Valley, located amid the great metropolitan centers of the Middle-West, has suffered from a lack of development of its resources even though the region is criss-crossed by the traffic lanes of every form of land transportation. Scattered throughout the Basin are counties which have lost population for the last several decades.

The region drained by the Wabash River and its tributaries is rich in natural resources and has an advantageous location which can be used to make this one of the most productive river basins in the country. The agricultural, commercial, industrial, and recreational potentials are tremendous. Through concerted effort by the people, planning and development of the resources can be accomplished. Without planning, the economy will continue to lag and the problems of uncontrolled water, depleted soil, unproductive forests and general under-utilization of resources will persist in causing migration of people from the area.

Questions and Answers About The Wabash Valley Interstate Commission

WHAT IS THE WABASH RIVER VALLEY?



The Wabash Valley, as defined in the Bi-State Compact, includes, "... The Wabash River, its tributaries and all lands drained by said river and tributaries to whatever extent they lie within the party states". The Valley thus comprises some 33,000 square miles; it encompasses 68% of the State of Indiana and 16% of the State of Illinois.

WHAT IS THE WABASH VALLEY COMPACT?

Identical bills were passed by the General Assembly of Indiana and the General Assembly of Illinois setting forth provisions of this Compact and creating a bi-state commission. The Compact, approved by the Congress of the United States, was signed by the Governors of the two states on January 25, 1960. The Compact is an agreement between the two states to formulate a comprehensive plan of development of the resources of the Wabash Valley.

WHAT IS THE WABASH VALLEY INTERSTATE COMMISSION?

Legislative action requires each of the party states to be represented by seven members on this Commission. These 14 members, serving without compensation, are responsible for the work of the Commission whose purpose, as stated in the Compact, is:

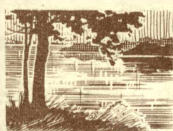
"The party states (Indiana and Illinois), find that the Wabash Valley has suffered from a lack of comprehensive planning for the optimal use of its human and natural resources and that underutilization and inadequate benefits from its potential wealth are likely to continue until there is proper organization to encourage and facilitate coordinated development of the Wabash Valley as a region and to relate its agricultural, industrial, commercial, recreational, transportation, development and other problems to the opportunities in the Valley. To this end it is the purpose of the party states to recognize and provide for such development and coordination and to establish an agency of the party states with powers sufficient and appropriate to further regional planning for the Valley."

WHY IS THE WABASH VALLEY INTERSTATE COMMISSION NEEDED?

State and federal agencies as well as local agencies are assigned the responsibility for development of a single resource, such as water or minerals, or a specific phase of development of a resource, for example, flood control. A particular agency may have little or no jurisdiction over related phases of resources management or the management of associated resources. The Wabash Valley Interstate Commission has the responsibility for coordinating the efforts of the several local, state and federal agencies to obtain efficient and effective development of resources for all purposes and to secure the development of all possible resources within a particular region of the Basin or the Basin as a whole.

WHAT ARE THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE BASIN?

The Wabash River Valley is rich in natural resources and can be developed as an even greater economic region if properly managed.



WATER—An abundance of water is available in the Wabash River and its tributaries; in addition, certain areas of the Valley are abundantly supplied with groundwater.

Although billions of gallons of surface water are available daily, a relatively small amount of this water has been utilized to maximum potentials. Uncontrolled, this water represents a hazard; controlled, it will become an even more valuable resource in the future.



SOIL—The Wabash Basin contains many thousands of acres of productive soil. Control of water on agricultural land and the reduction of soil erosion to minimum permissible limits are essential steps in attaining increased production from this land.



FORESTS—Some of the most productive forest lands in the U. S. are found in this Valley, yet many of the 4,000,000 acres of timber in this region are producing little or no income. Adequate management can result in income to the landowner as high as \$12-\$15 per acre per year.



WILDLIFE — Intensification of farming and the expansion of urban areas are among the many reasons for the continuing decrease in wildlife populations. Song birds as well as game species represent a desirable resource serving a vital recreational need for man. Many areas in the Valley can be developed to provide the food and cover requirements of wildlife.



MINERALS—The Wabash Basin is rich in minerals, particularly, the mineral fuels; coal, petroleum and natural gas deposits provide great opportunities for industrial development. Abundant supplies of sand, gravel and limestone are available for the construction industries. Valuable clays and other mineral resources are produced and additional deposits await development to enhance the economic potential of the Basin.

ARE NOT THESE RESOURCES ALREADY DEVELOPED?

In many parts of the Valley these resources have been developed; over most of the Basin, greater production and more profit can be achieved through more efficient use of our resources. In some instances, almost nothing has been done to develop these resources. Widespread flooding, nearly dry channels in late summer and fall, silt laden and

polluted streams characterize our water resources; our forests contain poor quality scrub trees, weed trees and trees disfigured and damaged by grazing and fire; marginal and sub-marginal farms operated at a loss to the owner indicate a lack of adequate management of our soil and agricultural water resource.

WHY IS A PROGRAM OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT NEEDED?

Of the 82 counties in the Wabash Valley, 32 counties have fewer people living in them today than inhabited these counties in 1900. Adequate resource development will enable these people to make a better living and will stem this migration to regions of greater economic opportunity. In addition to the need for development in the so-called "poorer" areas of the Valley, consideration must be given to the need for providing employment opportunities for the increased number of people who will occupy this region during the next few decades. By the year 2,000, the resources of this Valley must support more than 7,000,000 people. Present employment opportunities do not provide adequately for half this number.

HOW CAN MORE EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT OF THESE RESOURCES BE ACCOMPLISHED?

The continued construction of flood control and flood prevention structures to protect rural and urban lands from the ravages of flood water coordinated with a network of water storage reservoirs, pollution control measures and low flow augmentation will permit the development of a water resource. Such a program now is underway. The Wabash and its tributaries could provide many more billions of gallons of water per day for industrial, municipal and agricultural usage, but floods fill the valleys in late winter and spring, while in late summer and fall many of the tributaries and, indeed, the Wabash River, are essentially dry.

Effective control of farm land through application of agricultural conservation measures on all land used for agricultural production, correlated with a program of diverting from agricultural use those areas of marginal and sub-marginal agricultural potential, will improve the economy of this region.

Planning to accomplish the most profitable use of rural non-agricultural lands will open new economic opportunities for many areas in the Valley. Analysis of the capabilities of these areas and a comparison with the needs of the Valley and ad-

jacent regions will enable the recommendations of programs for most profitable development.

WHAT IS A RESOURCE INVENTORY?

Before a planning program can be developed it is necessary to know what resources are available. The Commission has initiated work with many state and federal agencies to determine not only the quantity but the quality of the resources in the Basin. This resource inventory, on a county-by-county basis will be completed as rapidly as funds become available through governmental appropriation or foundation grants to the Commission and to the state and federal agencies cooperating with the Commission in this project.

The Members of The Wabash Valley Interstate Commission

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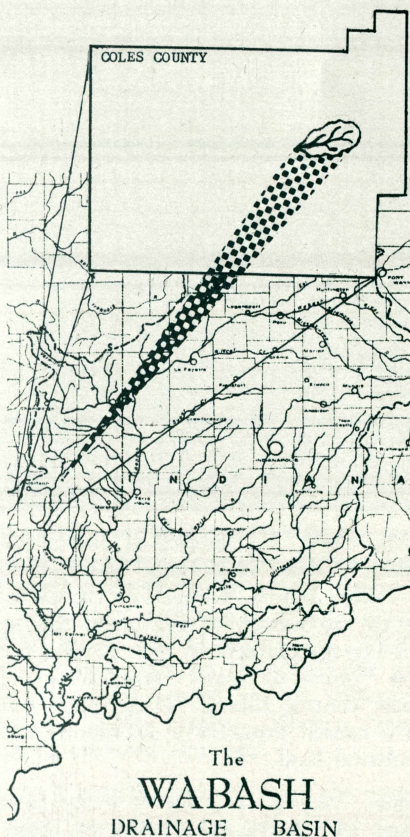
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ASCS

FUNDS TO
STABILIZE FARM LAND
and
PROTECT CITY WATER SUPPLY



ACP SPECIAL PROJECT

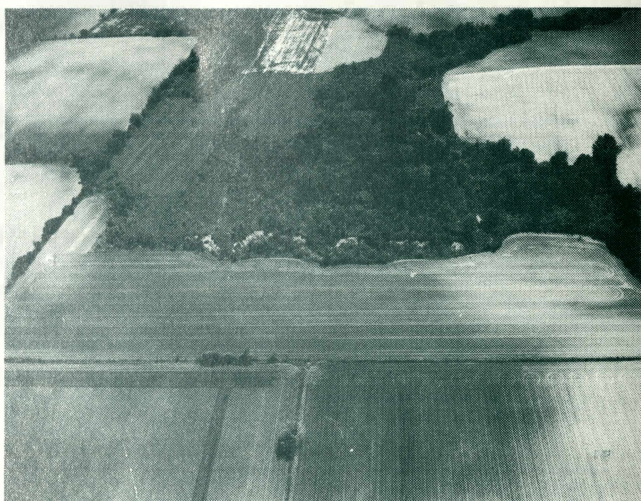
RATTLESNAKE CREEK
COLES COUNTY, ILLINOIS

WABASH VALLEY INTERSTATE COMMISSION
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Through the AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM, the Federal Government shares with farmers the cost of carrying out approved soil and water conservation practices including related wildlife conservation practices.

Under the special projects program certain areas were selected which presented unique problems in urban-farm interrelationships in benefits from erosion control. Rattlesnake Creek is one of these areas. The control of water and stabilization of the land surface is of direct monetary value to the farmers on whose land the work was done and to the citizens of Charleston whose supply of water is being threatened by siltation of the reservoir.



Rattlesnake Creek, a tributary of the Embarrass River, is approximately three miles long and drains 1300 acres of land in Coles County, Illinois. In the three miles from headwaters to the mouth of the creek this stream drops 190 feet an average gradient of over 63 feet per mile. This condition is typical of many areas along the Embarrass River in east central Illinois. Deep gulleys cut by these streams have caused progressive abandonment of formerly good agricultural land.

Rattlesnake Creek is only one of many such streams in this area and like Rattlesnake many of these streams do not fall within the scope of Public Law 566, The Small Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act.

The Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District Board as well as other farmers in the area have long awaited a program which will provide assistance in solving these problems of excessive runoff and extremely active erosion.

Recently the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service made funds available for a limited number of special ACP Projects. Rattlesnake Creek was one of those selected as a pilot area. Using Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service funds as an incentive for action in the



Rattlesnake Creek Watershed, farmers in the area are participating in a land treatment and construction program which will stabilize this creek and its tributaries.

The Coles County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service Committee, the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District Board, and the Rural Area Development Committee representing the local land owners were extremely active in planning and promoting this project to control the watershed of Rattlesnake Creek.

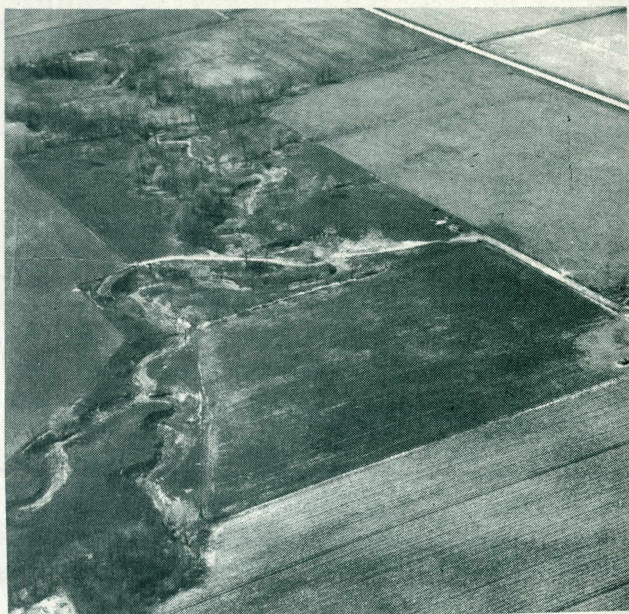




Rattlesnake Creek has been stabilized. Among the practices used are grassed waterways, terraces, diversions, drainage ditches, tile lines and tile outlets, farm ponds and small erosion control structures. Land treatment measures include pasture planting; contour farming, including strip cropping; tree planting; woodland management; timber stand improvement and wildlife habitat development.

Rattlesnake like many other streams in the area has only recently become a radically unstable stream. Prior to mechanization of agriculture, much of the land in this area was devoted to pasture, necessary in an agricultural pattern which included horses instead of tractors. More intensive farming and the expansion of the cultivable areas so increased runoff that this stream and its tributaries became newly active and highly erosive. Modern farming practices have now stabilized this area.

The land will remain essentially in the same state of cultivation following construction of this project, however the land owners have agreed to modify farming practices in accordance with recommendations made by the Work Unit Conservationist and the Farm Forester, so that runoff will be controlled from the time a raindrop first strikes the soil surface. Soils have been tested and Limestone, Rock Phosphate, and Potash will be applied in accordance with the results of the tests. This will provide high fertility insuring good production in a cropping system designed to control erosion. Minimum tillage will be practiced at all times. No fall plowing will be done. Crop residues will be left over the winter and will be managed in such a way that these residues will protect the soil



surface. Grass and legume seeding recommended according to requirements of the soil and the surface of the field will become a part of the rotation. Cross slope farming will be used on all but the most level fields. Soy beans will be produced only on those fields not subject to erosion. Pastures will not be destroyed by over-grazing; livestock population will be limited to the carrying capacity of the pasture land.

Areas which cannot be farmed will be developed and managed for maximum production of wildlife or will be put in well-managed timber areas producing desirable, good quality trees. Much of the area now farmed, at one time produced some of the best timber in Illinois; these lands will again be potentially prime forest areas.

Fish also will come under management in this area with all water impoundments having one-half acre or more of water surface being stocked with desirable species.

In addition to being a desirable project through improving the income of the farm owners in this watershed area, stabilization of the land and control of the water will protect the water supply of the City of Charleston and Eastern Illinois University.

Lake Charleston on the Embarrass River, the source of municipal water for this community, lies immediately below the mouth of Rattlesnake Creek. This lake has been subjected to severe siltation throughout its short life of 17 years. During the first 13 years, 1947-1960, forty per cent of this reservoir was lost because of sediment deposited by the streams which flow into it. Stabilization of Rattlesnake Creek will greatly reduce this rate of siltation.



Similar programs on other streams in the area could eventually make the Embarrass River a clear, beautiful stream instead of a muddy, silt-carrying channel. Thus through cooperative effort by local land owners, resident personnel of state and federal agencies and with funds provided by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, one small area has been put under control providing greater income, clear, beautiful water, homes for wildlife, recreation for the land owners and residents of a nearby city



and is protecting the water supply of that city. We need only to multiply this program many fold to make this one of the greatest steps toward true conservation of our land, water, timber and wildlife.

The Wabash Valley Interstate Commission, convinced that stabilization of the land is basic to all other land and water development, brings this project to your attention. We believe that projects of this kind should become a part of the program of every Soil and Water Conservation District.

The following landowners and operators are those participating in the Rattlesnake Creek Special ACP Project.

Wayne Coartney, Ashmore, Illinois

Sherman Hite, R. R. #1, Ashmore, Illinois

Earl Kibler, R. R. #1, Ashmore, Illinois

R. R. Newell, 611-14th Street, Charleston, Illinois

S. K. Sims, R. R. #1, Charleston, Illinois

J. R. Sweeney, R. R. #1, Ashmore, Illinois

Rex Sweeney, R. R. #1, Charleston, Illinois

Georgia Updegraff, R. R. #1, Charleston, Illinois

James Updegraff, R. R. #1, Charleston, Illinois